

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

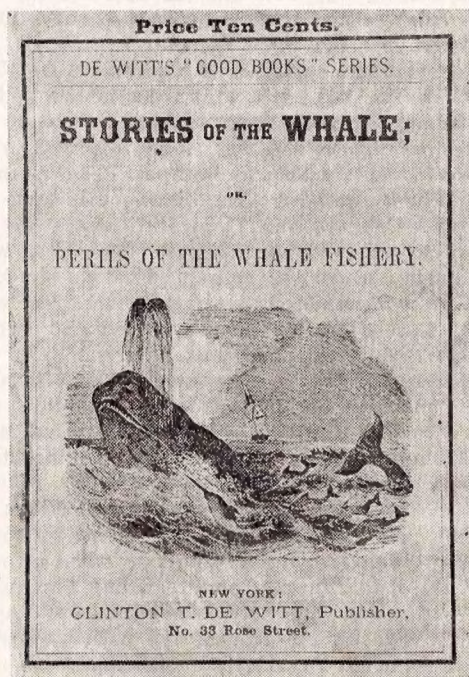
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## Stratemeyer and the Blacks

By John T. Dizer, Jr.



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 187

DE WITT'S GOOD BOOK SERIES

Publisher: Clinton T. DeWitt, 33 Rose St., New York, N. Y. (Successor to Robert M. DeWitt). Issues: 15 (unnumbered). Dates: Undated (early 1870's). Schedule of Issues: Unknown. Size: 7¼x5". Pages 56-64. Price: 10c. Illustrations: Pictorial line drawing on cover. Contents: "Factual" account of sea, western and pioneering adventures and a sprinkling of humorist selections. (List of titles to be found elsewhere in this issue). Some of the titles were reprinted by Henry J. Wehman, 108 Park Row, New York during the 1890's and early 1900's.



## Stratemeyer and the Blacks

By John T. Dizer, Jr.

How did Stratemeyer regard the Blacks? The common reaction is to cite "Eradicate Sampson" of the Tom Swift Series, "Sam" and "Dinah" of the Bobbsey Twins or "Washington White" of the Great Marvel Series.<sup>1,2</sup> These series, however, were all products of the Stratemeyer Syndicate and practically all of the books were written by contract writers. True, they were Stratemeyer's series, lock, stock and barrel. He outlined them, contracted for the writing and edited them but they were only a part and a small part of the tremendous production of the Stratemeyer Syndicate. Of more immediate interest is Edward Stratemeyer's own attitude towards the Blacks and for that we must examine his own writings.

To do this, we should establish guidelines. We should take his writings in their total context and not use isolated examples. We should note the period in which the writing was done and the audience for whom the writing was intended. We must be aware of the social attitudes of the day and the common ways of portraying Blacks in literature.

Edward Stratemeyer personally wrote approximately 150 boys books between 1891 and 1926. This is exclusive of titles he wrote for various Syndicate series. About forty of these books appeared first as serials in various boys magazines or story papers and were later reprinted in hard cover. The stories were written to entertain and instruct. The moral tone was high. Drinking, gambling, cheating and reading dime novels were abominations and rewarded accordingly. Courage and physical fitness were characteristics of the heroes. The boys observed the Sabbath faithfully, whenever possible, and went both to Sunday school and church. Fortunately for the readers the boys were also involved in numerous interesting and generally believable adventures. Three of the books are science fiction and two are presidential biographies but most are stories of normal American boys both of the then-present day and of historical times. They were written to please the youthful audience of the time and were highly successful. They also pleased the critics and, if the number of existing ex-library copies is any indication, even pleased librarians. They did not expound any social gospel other than the American virtues of moral integrity and aggressiveness.

Just what was the American attitude towards the Black at this time? Sol Cohen has found that, "At the beginning of the twentieth century the position the Negro occupied in the eyes of most Americans was that of an irresponsible child, incapable of self-determination and requiring supervision by his Caucasian superiors."<sup>3</sup> He notes that both Jacob Riis and Ray Stannard Baker in well-documented studies of attitudes of the period found this to be true. "Thus we find that during the period 1890-1908, there was a widespread view in the United States that the Negro race was inferior; that the Negro was incapable of self-regulation, self-discipline, or self-care."<sup>4</sup>

These perceptions could result in a standardized stereotype in at least

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some literature of the period and many writers believe this to be so. Preer comments, "In the earlier books there was a definite attempt to show the Negro boy and girl content with his lot in life, accepting defeat, unambitious, menial, inferior in all respects."<sup>5</sup> Deane notes that "Negroes have remained servants and slaves, always in inferior positions," and, "... Negroes are also presented as lazy, ignorant, good natured, cowardly; they are consistently patronized."<sup>6</sup> Cohen says, "He was a child who needed the guidance of more mature and competent (Caucasian) persons around him. These attitudes permeate the children's literature of this period."<sup>7</sup>

The use of dialect is a separate issue. Deane believes that dialect was "almost invariably degrading—it was a source of humor and an indication of inferiority . . ."<sup>8</sup> Soderbergh remarks, "The authors' subconscious contempt for the Negro manifested not only in the mutilated dialect they chose for him . . . but also in their adjectival descriptions."<sup>9</sup> His reference is to such terms as "nigger," "darky," "simple-minded colored hands," and "hard-wukin' coon."

We should remember that at that time dialect was expected in the portrayal of all ethnic and regional characters and is practically worthless as a measure of attitude. There is no dictionary of dialect and each writer was free to use whatever struck his fancy. When O. G. Smith wrote to Gilbert Patten in 1895 outlining his plans for the Frank Merriwell series he said, "It would be of advantage to the series to have introduced the Dutchman, the Negro, the Irishman, and any other dialect you are familiar with."<sup>10</sup> The Vermonter had a dialect and the Virginian had a dialect, not as ridicule but as identification and for "realism."

Controversy over the use of dialect continued among writers and librarians at least into the 1940's. The librarian of the Chattanooga, Tennessee, Public Library made the statement, "Dialect is the folk flavor in the speech of all races; remove all this, and replace it with the 'king's English,' and you have done away with much of the racy tang of expression among books and people."<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the word "nigger" was commonly used for any dark skinned race and did not have the degrading connotation 75 years ago that it has today. "Wop," "Dago," and "Kike" were similar terms commonly used for various ethnic groups.

It is quite possible that we have stereotypes of the stereotypes. The "Comstock Influence" which has permeated attitudes towards dime novels, story papers and series books has, through the "halo effect," affected some writers approach to the image of the Black in series books. Sub-literary or "unsuitable books would be expected to have sub-literary and unsuitable characterizations."<sup>12</sup>

A point to consider is why blacks were included in boys books at all? Blacks were a minute portion of the reading population. The usual assumption seems to be that they are added either strictly for humor or by comparison to show the superiority of the white. This assumption will also be examined in connection with Straemeyer's writings.

For comparison of ethnic stereotypes consider two well-known and respected writers of different periods. Frank R. Stockton's popular *Rudder Grange* was copyrighted in 1879, 1899 and 1907 and went through many editions. In it, the leading character wanted to rent a baby. Naturally he visited an Irish settlement to rent one.

"About three miles from our house was a settlement known as New Dublin. It was a cluster of poor and doleful houses, inhabited entirely by Irish people, whose dirt and poverty seemed to make them very contented and happy."

He went to a Mrs. Duffy. "It seemed to her like a person coming into



the country to purchase weeds. Weeds and children were so abundant in New Dublin."

Several pages of Irish dialect later he rents little Pat and takes him home where he runs into some female resistance.

"You really don't think," she said, . . . "that I will consent to your keeping such a creature as this in the house. Why, he's a regular little Paddy! If you kept him he'd grow up into a hod-carrier."<sup>13</sup> So much for the Irish.

Penrod was a popular and "high-class" book about boys by Booth Tarkington. The stories date from the 1913-1914 period. It is still in print as a paperback "classic." Herman and Verman are two black boys who have moved into a cottage across the alley from Penrod. They explain why.

"Mammy an' Queenie move in town an' go git de house all fix up befo' pappy git out."

"Out of where?"

"Jail. Pappy cut a man, an' de police done kep' him in jail evah sense Chris'mustime; but dey goin' tuh'n him loose ag'in nex' week."

"What'd he cut the other man with?"

"Wif a pitchfawk."

One of the boys is tongue tied. The other has a finger missing. His brother was plahing with an ax, "an' I lay my finguh on de do'-sill and I say, 'Verman, chop 'er off!' So Verman he chop 'er right spang off up to de roots! Yessuh."

Somewhat later Rupe Collins, a disreputable friend of Penrod's, has a run-in with Herman and Verman.

Rupe addressed his host briefly: "Chase them nigs out o' here!"

"Don' call me nig," said Herman. "I mine my own biznuzz. You let 'em boys alone."

"You ole black nigger," the fat-faced boy said venomously to Herman, and then battle was joined with "the not very remote descendant of Congo man-eaters."

Herman's and Verman's Bangala great-grandfathers never considered people of their own jungle neighborhood proper material for a meal, but they looked upon strangers—especially truculent strangers—as distinctly edible.

Verman struck from behind . . . For, in his simple, direct African way he wished to kill his enemy, and he wished to kill him as soon as possible.

Rupe had not learned that an habitually aggressive person runs the danger of colliding with beings in one of those lower stages of evolution wherein theories about "hitting below the belt" have not yet made their appearance.

The battle grew in scope. "Primal forces operated here, and the two blanched, slightly higher products of evolution, Sam and Penrod, no more thought of interfering than they would have thought of interfering with an earthquake.

Verman went after Rupe with a lawn-mower and Herman grabbed a garden-scythe.

"I'm go' to cut you' gizzud out," he announced definitely, "an' eat it!"

At that point Rupe abruptly left for home.

Penrod contains several quaint similes. . . . for dogs are even more superstitious than boys and coloured people; . . . " . . . the barber applied cooling lotions which made Penrod smell like a coloured housemaid's ideal." " . . . the 'Slingo Sligo Slide' burst from the orchestra like the lunatic shriek of a gin-maddened nigger; . . . "<sup>14</sup> There are apparently stereotypes and stereotypes.

With this background let us return to Stratemeyer. This review considers 137 of the boys books which he wrote himself. Blacks appear in 72 of



them for a percentage of 67. Admittedly, many of the appearances are minor. This still seems to be an unusually high rate of Black visibility in boys books which were written about white boys for a white readership. It is obviously not practical to use all references. The selections included are believed to be representative of the wide variety of attitudes expressed. The subjects, times and places of Stratemeyer's books are almost unlimited. They cover many historical periods, geographical locations, all types of adventure, camping, sports, war, prep school stories and two presidential biographies. The attitudes presented towards the black race might be expected to vary somewhat with the period, locale and type of book. For this reason the references have been roughly grouped so that they have a reasonable continuity. The dates given are the earliest publication dates of the stories.

A measure of Stratemeyer's personal attitude, divorced from the setting of his stories, can be found in his presidential biographies. In *American Boys' Life of William McKinley*, (published 1901) McKinley gave a speech "at his old homestead town, Niles." Hundreds of men he knew were there. "Then he discovered an old negro who used to tell the boys marvellous ghost stories, so that some of the lads would be afraid to be out after dark. The negro was now bent with age and almost blind, but he leaned there on his knotty stick, more than anxious to listen to what McKinley might have to say."

"There is also another story, told by an old colored woman, which I think is worth relating, for it shows that this true-hearted American gentleman did not forget the poor and lowly, even though elevated to the highest office of the Nation." She stood in line on reception day waiting to "grasp the chief magistrate by the hand."

"I dun stood dar jest like a fool," she said, when relating her experience. "He seemed to be sech a big man, I couldn't say nuffin nohow. He looked at me cu'rus like, and' all to once he says, 'Ain't dis Mammy Tucker?' Den I most gasp' fo' bref, an' I says, 'Yes, dis is Mammy Tucker, Mister resident,' an' he give my hand a hot squeeze, an' says, 'Glad to see you, Mrs. Tucker. I hope you are well.' They talk some more " . . . an' den I had to pass on, wid everybody a-looking an' a-starin' an' a-starin' at me, 'cause de blessed President had stopped to talk to a poor ole colored pusson like me."

Later McKinley gave her son Washington "a position as a cleaner in one of the public buildings, with a salary upon which mother and son lived very nicely." This story seems to reflect both the attitudes of the kindly white President and Stratemeyer towards the poor and lowly and also the attitude off the poor and lowly towards themselves. The job of cleaner would be appropriate for the times.

Stratemeyer discusses Roosevelt's work on the Civil Service Commission from 1889-95 in *American Boys' Life of Theodore Roosevelt* (published 1904). "One of the best and wisest acts of the Commission was to place the colored employees of the Government on an equal footing with the white employees. In the past the colored employees had occupied their places merely through the whim or good-will of those over them. Now this was changed, and any colored man who could pass the examination, and who was willing to attend strictly to his labor, was as safe in his situation as anybody."

An indication of attitudes in general is shown in this passage: "President Roosevelt sympathized deeply with the condition of the negroes in the South, and for the purpose of learning the true state of affairs sent for Mr. Booker T. Washington, one of the foremost colored men of this country and founder of the Tuskegee Industrial School for Colored People. They had a long conference at the White House, which Mr. Washington enjoyed very much. For



this action many criticised the President severely, but to this he paid no attention, satisfied that he had done his duty as his conscience dictated."

Turning to the historical books *The Colonial Series* tells of events during the French and Indian Wars of the 1750's and '60s, primarily on the then-western frontier. There are various references to Blacks.

*On the Trail of Pontiac*, published in 1903, contains dialogue which purports to give attitudes of the seventeen hundreds on slavery. Barringford is an old Frontiersman. Dave Morris and his cousin Henry are the youthful heroes.

"The blacks are naturally slaves—ain't good fer nuthin' else," put in Barringford, who had some old-fashioned ideas on the subject.

"I don't believe that, Sam," came from Dave. "Some black people are wiser than you think. If they had the chance to rise, they'd do it."

"I heard tell that some men believe in freeing the blacks," came from Henry.

"Some on 'em don't want to be free," said the old frontiersman. "Jest look at the slaves belongin' to old Lord Fairfax, and to the Dinwiddies, and to the Washingtons. Why, they all think it is an honor to belong to them families. They wouldn't go if ye druv 'em away."

"Yes, I know, for I have talked to some of 'em myself," said Dave. "The Washington blacks are particularly faithful. If they were set free I don't suppose they'd know what to do with themselves."

"They'd starve," said Barringford.

"But to come back to where we started from," went on Dave. "There is a difference between being a white man's slave and being an Indian captive. The whites don't kill their slaves or torture them."

"They torture some of 'em," replied Henry. "I've seen a negro whipped till it made my blood boil. Of course the majority of 'em are treated fairly good."

The philosophical discussion continues but is interrupted by some wandering buffalo which have to be hunted down.

In *Trail and Trading Post* (published 1906) "The Indians—a mixed band under a chief called Crow Feather—had ambushed the (pack) train at the ford and slain or mortally wounded all but one negro and a white hunter named Sturm, a German from upper Pennsylvania. Sturm and the negro got away together, each however wounded. They traveled for four weeks in the forest, when Sturm went crazy. At last they reached a settlement, where the negro told his story. Sturm was placed under medical care and regained his reason some time later."

It is interesting that the white went crazy and the negro guided him to safety. Later in the same book, "It had been arranged that Asa Dobson and his wife should remain at the Morris homestead for the time being, and also an old colored man known as Pompey Sugg. Pompey was a fine shot, and said he would keep a constant guard against Indians."

"Dar ain't no Injuns gwine ter git de best ob dis chicken," said the colored man. "If da come nosin' around hyer Pomp will gib 'em a dose of buckshot, ki hi!" And he laughed as if shooting Indians was the best joke in the world. He was known to be a faithful fellow, and Joseph Morris placed great reliance on him.

Different scenes appear in *With Washington in the West*, (published 1901.) "... His attention was drawn to a fight in the stable yard, between two of the negro hostlers. This was a head-ramming contest, in which the slaves butted each other over and over again until at last one apparently had enough of it, when he ran away, leaving the victor to ha! ha! loudly."



On the way to Annapolis they "shot a deer and also aided a plantation owner to overcome a negro who had run amuck and was threatening to kill everybody in sight." In this series there seems to be a variety of Blacks, ranging from the head-banging hostlers to a proficient old rifleman.

Certain of the "Lt. Lounsberry" books, attributed to Stratemeyer, have a Virginia setting of the same period. In *The Trader's Captive* (published 1904) George Lee is surprised by two French sympathizers and the slave Hannibal. George attacked the slave.

"George, although well trained at rough and tumble, was having a hard time of it. The slave, as has been stated, was of huge build, and work on the plantations had endued him with muscles of iron. The youth was outclassed."

After George saves Hannibal's life the slave become a loyal friend. When George is trapped in the Virginia mansion of Hannibal's master, Hannibal rescues him and leads him to safety at considerable danger to himself.

"Ah couldn't leave yo' to be killed by Marse Pory nohow, Marse Lee; but if he evah finds out what Ah's done, he'll flay Hannibal's black hide clean off'n him."

George is properly grateful and takes Hannibal with him. "Both Gov. Dinwiddie and Col. Washington will remember you for what you've done this day, Hannibal," said George." The Blacks are slaves and portrayed as servants. They are not, however, cowards or fools.

In *By Order of the Colonel* (published 1904) the servant Scipio takes an active part in overcoming French and Indian captors.

"Scipio also bore a hand, effectually quelling the Indians who had been first knocked down with the paddles. The black, who had nursed his wrongs for long, took fierce delight in raising the redmen and rolling them into the water."

A few years later we find a northern Black in the battle of Bunker Hill. As described in *The Minute Boys of Bunker Hill* (published 1899) the battle has been raging fiercely and the Americans are almost out of ammunition. The British have finally taken the redoubt.

"The day is ours!" The cry came from Major Pitcairn, he who had ordered that first volley at Lexington . . .

"De day ain't yours, anyway," came softly from a negro named Salem, and, lifting his flintlock quickly, he let fly his last charge,—and Pitcairn never lived to view the victory he had helped to make possible.

It may be considered a little surprising to find a courageous black soldier and effective fighter as well in this early northern battle of the Revolutionary War. A more typical occupation is shown later in the book. Roger Morse is in prison in Boston. "At the same time the guard was reduced from twelve to six soldiers, with one negro cook to prepare the scanty food provided."

Stratemeyer reports a true incident of the Lewis and Clark expedition in *Pioneer Boys of the Great Northwest* (published 1904). The time was 1804. The expedition had just met the Sioux.

"At this time there occurred at the fort something which cannot be passed without mention. An aged Indian chief of the Minnetarees paid the expedition a visit, and after being received with distinction said he had been told that there was with the party a person who was entirely black.

"It is quite true," said Captain Lewis.

The chief said he would like to see the person, and York, the negro body servant, was brought forward. The aged chief was very much astonished, and tried to rub the black off with his finger, thinking it was paint. But when he saw the woolly head of the negro he was convinced that the man was really different from any he had ever seen or heard of, and he went away



much mystified."

Pompey Shuck, a negro in *For the Liberty of Texas* (published 1900), had "... followed Mr. Radbury from the old home in Georgia and insisted that he be taken in and set to work, 'jess as on de ole plantation, Mars' Radbury.'" The time is 1835 but whether Pompey is a slave or free is not clear.

"Pompey was a faithful worker and had dropped into the routine without an effort. Mr. Radbury was glad that he had come, for he felt that he wanted a man around, in case the coming war carried him a distance from home."

Pompey also served as cook and took care of the horses. When the Radburys were away from the ranch Pompey was in charge and managed quite well. He saw a man creeping around the ranch.

"What became of the man, Pompey?" went on Mr. Radbury.

"I can't say as to dat, sah. As soon as I dun spot him, say, I got de gun, an' he run away like de Old Boy was after him, sah."

When the snooper was caught, "... Pompey was set to watch him for the remainder of the night. The negro was given a pistol and was instructed to discharge it at the first intimation of danger of any kind." The whites went to bed, apparently with full confidence in Pompey's vigilance and courage.

The boys of *Pioneer Boys of the Gold Fields* (published 1906) are freed by some bloodhounds but rescued by a negro slave.

"What fo' you-uns come ashoar?" asked the voice, and now a burly negro put in an appearance under the tree. He had a smoky barn lantern in one hand and a stout club in the other.

When the negro was convinced they meant no harm he called off the bloodhounds, rescued the boy's scow, took them to the house where "Aunt Kate" the black cook fed them, and let them spend the night.

After the boys got to the gold fields of California they need a cook. "A man from Ohio had drifted into camp, with his wife and daughter. The girl was a likely miss of seventeen, and she readily agreed to play nurse to Mark now that he was on the road to recovery. She also agreed to cook the meals for all hands, for the sum of ten dollars per week—wages that were not considered extra high during those exciting times." She was evidently a good cook for at the end of the book she married Silas Williams, one of the boys. She is only one of the many white cooks—as well as black—noted in Stratemeyer's writings.

The reader may notice several "burly" blacks in the references. This characteristic was not limited to blacks. In this book the boys had an unpleasant run-in with a burly white.

"They waited and heard two persons coming along, each on horseback. One was a burly fellow of fifty, with a heavy beard, . . ."

"You'll hand that money over to me," cried the burly man.

"What, would you rob me?" gasped the youth.

"I want that money, and I am bound to have it," came coolly from the burly individual." There is no question but what he was white, villainous and burly.

*Defending His Flag* was written as a serial for "American Boy," expanded and published in hard cover as a quality "single" under Stratemeyer's own name. It is much longer than his other works and was never included in any series. The characterizations of the Blacks are not flattering and some of the stereotyping is pronounced. Whether he is attempting to show Civil War attitudes realistically or whether the book reflects his own attitudes or the prevailing attitudes of 1907, when the book was written, is not clear.

Since this is the story of the Civil War it would be expected to find



Blacks in it and they are in evidence throughout the book. Louis Rockford is in the Union army and Andy Arlington in the Confederate army so their attitudes might vary. Most of the action takes place in the South.

Louis is about to be "cooled off" in a watering trough by southerners. Andy's father, Mr. Arlington, is inquiring about him. "Dey is dun gwine ter duck him," explained a darky, who sat on the edge of the store stoop, too lazy to get up and witness proceedings. It is not a very flattering picture.

When Louis was tied up in an old mill "he heard a broad, negro voice singing loudly: . . ." so he called for help.

"Wot's dat?"

"Help me! I am tied up in the mill!"

"Golly, who is you'?" There was a crashing through the woods and presently a tall darky, weighing all of two hundred pounds, blocked up the entrance to the mill. "Golly, yere's a bit of work!"

"Release me, will you?" asked Louis, eagerly.

"Who tied yo' up like dat, massa?"

"Some rascals who robbed me of my watch and money. Cut that rope. I am almost perished with cold."

The negro cut the rope and released Louis and Louis thanked him.

"Dat's all right, massa—glad to do yo' a good turn, sah. Yere, let me help yo' fasten dat old saddle, sah—seein' it's de best yo' got left, sah," and the ponderous black friend went to work with a will. The negro watched him out of sight and then went on his way, singing as before, as though to forget the discomforts of the storm in melody.

Andy, the southerner, has a different experience. He was spending the night at Parker's Mills. "Parker's Mills was full of slaves, and it had been whispered about that there was fear of an uprising among the colored folks. For this reason every slave was watched closely, and if any were found to be at all rebellious, they were chained up and subjected to severe lashings."

About 11 he heard a violent struggle and went down stairs "to find the master of the house, a Mr. Rockleigh, struggling valiantly in the grasp of two burly negroes who were his slaves. The negroes had contemplated flight, but before going had sneaked into the house in an attempt to steal some money which had been left in an oldfashioned secretary in the room."

"Let go, Pomp," gasped Mr. Rockleigh. "Let go, or sure as I live I'll flay you alive for this."

"Dun yo' let go, Pomp," put in one of the burly negroes. "We is in dis to de end, remember!"

"I ain't a-lettin' go, Cuffy," replied Pomp. "Now, Massa Rockleigh, yo' quit yo' noise, or I'll knock yo' ober de head wid dis yere club. We . . . is bound to hab our own way."

"You—you scoundrels!" cried the master, but even as he spoke the club descended and the man of the house fell back partly unconscious from a blow upon the head."

Andy appears on the scene with a pistol.

"Don't—don't shoot me!" yelled Cuffy, in abject terror. "Please, massa sodger, don't shoot!" and he dropped upon his knees. He could stand almost anything but a display of firearms.

"Cuffy, yo' is a fool!" howled Pomp. "Come on, if yo' is gwine wid me. Remember, if we is cotched now we'll be more dan half-killed wid de lash. Take dat."

He hurled a heavy club at Andy who promptly shot him in the shoulder but both slaves ran away.

It is presumed that this interchange was supposed to be a reasonable pic-



ture both of Blacks and southern Whites of the period. It is not flattering of either. Cuffy is not particularly brave, at least in front of a gun, but neither is he a caricature. Pompey escapes but Cuffy is captured, "chained up in one of the barns and flogged until he dropped like one dead, from exhaustion and loss of blood."

This surprises Andy. "At home Andy had never experienced any difficulty with his father's slaves, for the colored people were well cared for and were too happy to create any disturbances." "... there was not a man or woman on the Arlington plantation who would not have been willing to lay down his or her life for any member of the family."

Andy belongs to the Confederate "Montgomery Grays." "The cook was a fat darky known as Mungo, a jolly fellow who sang from morning to night, and who could play a banjo to perfection."

Andy is attempting to escape from the enemy when he finds himself "face to face with a short, broad-faced, and not unpleasant-looking negro." He forces the negro to guide him to a cabin where an old woman gives him food.

"Tom is a Virginia nigger, isn't he?" asked Andy and confirmed that he was a runaway slave.

Tom takes off with Andy's horse.

"That negro has outwitted me!" Andy runs after Tom and horse and they have words. "... You're a runaway nigger, and if you don't stop I'll put a bullet through you."

"... If yo' shoot de Yankees will be down on yo' afo' yo' kin turn yo'-self," answered the negro ... "

Andy gets his horse back by a ruse but Tom is no quitter. "I'll git dem Union sodgers after yo' in no time!" he sang out as he disappeared."

Reaching the cabin again, he found the old woman at the doorway, still smoking her pipe. "Got back your hoss, eh?" she said. "That nigger is a sly one."

We may note that the term "nigger" is used more in this book than in most of Stratemeyer's stories. Andy is a southerner and the action is in Virginia. A reasonable inference might be that it is used for realism.

When Louis escapes from a southern prison he comes upon "a wretched negro hut, half tumbled down, on the edge of a clearing. In front of the hut an aged negro and a darkey boy were enjoying a feast of chicken meat and baked potatoes."

"Fo' de lan' sake, officer, doan you shoot us!" moaned the aged negro.

"I won't uncle; but come back with that chicken. I want a drumstick, and I want a couple of those potatoes; they smell good."

Much relieved in mind, the two colored ones returned and gladly divided their morning meal with Louis. "In an hour he was ready to go on, and the aged colored man gave him minute directions as to the best trail to follow."

Blacks are not portrayed in the Indian wars with Custer but make up for it in the Spanish American war. Stratemeyer wrote a number of books about this conflict with action both in Cuba and the Philippines.

In *A Young Volunteer in Cuba* (published 1898) we find some strikingly non-typical examples of Blacks. The boys had escaped from a Spanish camp but were being pursued. They took refuge in a hut and found in it "two aged negroes sitting in a far corner." The negroes spoke Spanish which translated into excellent English.

"I fought in the Ten Years' War," said Guido. "Then we hoped for liberty, too, but it did not come."

Jeronimo, the other negro, had fought for two years under Antonio Maceo and showed a scar on his left arm where a bullet had ploughed through the



flesh. (Antonio Maceo is identified by Stratemeyer in *Fighting in Cuban Waters* as "the noble Antonio Maceo, one of the best negro patriots that ever existed.") He said that he had once commanded a troop of thirty-six negroes who had laid in ambush for a Spanish regiment which had just arrived from Barcelona. "A third of the Spaniards had been killed and an equal number wounded." "We attended to the wounded," he grinned, in conclusion, meaning that those who did not get away had been butchered.

The Spanish found the hut and although Guido tried to steer them away they discovered the Americans. The boys fired on the Spaniards and "Guido now opened with the captured Mauser, and another man went down . . ." Jeronimo attacked the Spaniards with a long machete but was shot dead. Guido crept up behind the Spaniards, "blazed away and avenged the death of his brother-in-law." Then the Spaniards shot him. These Blacks were certainly as courageous and helpful as you could ask for.

Walter has been serving on the "Brooklyn" in *Fighting in Cuban Waters* (published 1899). He is sick and has become lost in the wilds of Cuba.

"He roused up to find a tall, fine-looking negro shaking him." Carlos Dunetta, the negro, is a spy for the Cuban army. He takes Walter on his back to his sister Josefina's hut who takes care of him. Josefina was "a short, fat, negro wench." "Usually negro huts in Cuba are dirty and full of vermin, but this was an exception. In her younger days, Josefina had worked for a titled lady of Santiago, and there had learned cleanliness quite unusual to those of her standing." This, apparently, is intended to be a sympathetic and factual portrayal.

Spaniards follow Carlos to the hut. Carlos and Walter are hidden but when the Spaniards threaten Josefina, Carlos goes to her defense and is shot, but not killed. Walter is found and the group is taken to the Spanish camp. That night, ". . . Walter felt a hand steal over his shoulder."

"What you think—we run for it, maybe?" whispered Carlos.

"I'd like to run, but we may get shot," whispered Walter in return.

"At this Carlos shrugged his shoulders. With two Mauser bullets in him the tall negro rebel was still 'game.' It was such men as he who had kept this unequal warfare in Cuba going for three long years despite Spain's utmost endeavors to end the conflict."

Carlos takes the initiative, shoots the Spanish guard and captain dead, and they escape. Eventually Carlos's brother guides Walter back to the shore. Carlos makes Walter look like a piker!

In another war story of Cuba, *When Santiago Fell*, published 1899, Alan Guerez and Mark Carter have been treed by a bloodhound. "A Cuban negro was approaching, a huge fellow all of six feet tall and dressed in the garb of an overseer." He calls off the dog, hides the boys for the night and feeds them breakfast.

In their travels the boys reached ". . . a small village called by the natives San Lerma—a mere collection of thatched cottages belonging to some sheep-raisers." "Our coming brought half a dozen men, women, and children to our side. They were mainly of negro blood, and the children were but scantily clothed." One of the negroes furnished them sleeping accommodations for the night.

"Many of us have joined the noble General Garcia," he said, in almost a whisper. "I would join too, but Teresa will not hear of it." Teresa was his wife—a fat, grim-looking wench who ruled the household with a rod of iron. She grumbled a good deal at having to provide us with a bed, but became very pleasant when Alano slipped a small silver coin into her greasy palm.

"That is a terrible existence," I said to Alano. "Think of living in that



fashion all your life!"

"They know no better," he returned philosophically. "And I fancy they are happy in their way. Their living comes easy to them, and they never worry about styles in clothing or rent day. Sometimes they have dances and other amusements. Didn't you see the home-made guitar on the wall?"

Later in their journey the boys heard a cry of distress. "A pitiable scene presented itself. Closely bound to a post which ran up beside the window was a Cuban negro of perhaps fifty years of age, gray-haired and wrinkled. He was scantily clothed, and the cruel green-hide cords which bound him had cut deeply into his flesh, in many places to such an extent that the blood was flowing. The negro's tongue was much swollen, and the first thing he begged for upon being released was a drink of water."

He was a rebel who fought under Generals Maceo and Garcia, was captured and robbed by the Spanish soldiers and bound to the post as a torture.

"Ah, but they are a cruel set!" And the eyes of the negro glowed wrathfully. "If only I was younger!"

When Mark and Alano became separated, Jorge, another negro, volunteers to guide Mark to the rendezvous at the old convent. On the way Mark has to restrain him from killing several Spaniards. They find Alano a prisoner, Jorge rescues him and guides the boys successfully to the convent where they find Alano's father. Mark Carter's father has been captured and is a prisoner of the Spaniards. Alano's father, a Cuban plantation owner, wants Jorge to look for Mr. Carter.

"I think the best thing we can do just now is to let Jorge go into town, pretending he is half starved and willing to do anything for anybody who will give him food. By taking this course, no one will pay much attention to him, as there are many such worthless blacks floating about, and he can quietly find his way around the fort and learn what prisoners, if any, are being kept there."

"The black grinned with pleasure, for he considered it a great honor to do spy work for such an influential planter as Captain Guerez. Possibly he had visions of a good situation on the plantation after the war was over; but, if so, he kept his thoughts on that point to himself."

Jorge did spying successfully and disappears from the story. It is to be hoped he got the job after the war. He had earned it.

The stories of the Spanish-American War which take place in the Philippines have fewer references to Blacks. The rallying cry in *Under Otis in the Philippines* (published 1899) is, "Olympia boys to the rescue! Don't hang back! Give the niggers what they deserve!" The reference was to Filipinos. This was true whether the natives were Tagals or Igorrotes.

Oliver Raymond's ship has been wrecked on Luzon in *A Sailor Boy with Dewey* (1899). The second mate discusses the natives.

"You see there is a terribly mixed population of Tagals, Malays, Papuan negroes, Chinese, Japanese, and Caucasians, with half and quarter-breeds without number."

The crew makes little distinction about race. "It will take two or three centuries to make these nagers half dasent, so it will!" is Irish Matt Gory's feeling.

The natives captured the ship "and now we noted another batch of the negroes on the shore." It develops that the crew was fighting with "Tagals, for such the natives were." They expected to defeat the natives easily, for "six white men ought to be able to subdue four times that number of such wretches," or so the first mate thought. He was wrong and the crew was captured, at least temporarily.



Oliver learns from the first mate that the Tagals are fighting under General Aguinaldo to throw off the yoke of Spain, but ". . . I don't believe they are capable of governing themselves."

"They certainly are not, if they are all like the fellows who made us prisoners."

"Oh, the better class of Tagals are not like these, lad. Why, I've been told that, in Manila, some of them are quite ladies and gentlemen. They can read and write, and affect the Spanish fashions."

By this time Oliver has apparently learned to respect the fighting ability of the natives. "I must confess that my heart leaped into my throat, as I had a mental vision of a tall Tagal sneaking up behind me and running me through with his cruel spear."

Captain Ponsberry in *Under Dewey at Manila* (published 1898) is annoyed with the Kanaka stevedores at Hawaii.

"Consarn 'em! Give me a white man for stevedore work, every time. The wust of 'em are worth three niggers!"

The comment is in keeping with Captain Ponsberry's character as a bluff old salt. The jingoistic attitudes expressed by his crew are typical of the time. Hobson, an English sailor, and Striker, a New England Yankee, are talking about modern battleships.

"I've been told the Chinese and Japanese used some of 'em during their late war, but them heathens don't count—not alongside o' Anglo-Saxon blood; eh, Hobson?"

"I grant you that, every time, Striker,—Anglo-Saxon blood every trip,—against the world," cried the Englishman, heartily. "Now you take it among ourselves," he went on, after a pause. "The Americans and English and Germans, and even the French, can get along together; but put a Spaniard or a Portuguese or an Italian, or one of that kind of fellows aboard and there's trouble right away—I've seen it a hundred times."

Grandon says, "Wish the captain had taken an Englishman or an American instead. I can't bear those Norwegians nor Poles nor Russians." They are not a particularly liberal crew.

*Young Hunters in Porto Rico* (published 1897) has this description.

"The people also interested the boys. A large proportion of them were black, the blacks increasing in number as the seacoast was left behind. Most of the colored men looked friendly enough, but here and there could be found fellows of mixed Carib blood—tall, ugly looking creatures."

"I reckon they are the Porto Rican brigands," whispered Dick, as they passed three of the ugly looking Caribs. "I don't think I would care to meet them on a dark night along a lonely road."

"These people have good cause to be ugly," put in Robert Menden. "Spain has robbed the natives for years. . . ."

The boys have problems with the "wily Caribs." They fall into a hole and the Caribs charge them \$10 to pull them out. Bumbum, the leader, later steals the boys supplies and robs another man. He is captured and the loot returned, not without difficulty. He is released and slinks away in the darkness.

"We want to keep our weather eyes open for thet chap," was old Jacob's comment. "He's the sort as would knife ye in the back if he got the chance."

It later appeared that "Bumbum had learned a lesson and did not appear, nor did any others of his calling put in an appearance." The Carib is a warlike Indian. Bumbum is apparently a mixture of Indian and Black.

Stratemeyer's Pan-American Series "embraces sight-seeing and adventures" in Central and South America. In *Lost on the Orinoco* (published 1902) the boys visit Curacao.



"I see a lot of negroes," observed Mark . . ."

"The population is mostly of colored blood," answered the professor. "The colored people are all free, yet the few Dutchmen that are here are virtually their masters. The negroes work in the phosphat mines, and their task is harder than that of a Pennsylvania coal miner ten times over."

In Venezuela, "A little negro boy went around with them. He had learned to say, "Yes, mistair," and "No, mistair," and he repeated these over and over again, each time bowing profoundly and rolling his eyes in a truly comical fashion. The boy's name was Bulo, and our friends took to him from the start." When the boy laughed he showed "two rows of pure white ivories."

In *Young Explorers of the Isthmus* (published 1903) the boys visit Nicaragua.

"This soil would produce good crops of many things," said the professor, as they rode along. "But the average (Nicaraguan) Indian and negro is of a lazy nature and will not do more than is absolutely necessary. As for the better class of Nicaraguans, they will not settle in this section. . ."

In *Young Explorers of the Amazon* (published 1904) the boys were watching coffee being loaded on ships in Santos, Brazil. "The loading was done mostly by negroes, strong fellows, who thought nothing of carrying two bags of coffee weighing over two hundred and fifty pounds on their heads and shoulders. . . " Later they visit Bahia.

"Somebody was telling me about the blacks of Bahia," said Frank. "Are they a superior people?"

"The population of Bahia is about half black and mulatto, and the black people are to a large extent superior to many others of the same race. Many of them are well formed and really handsome, and you will find a large number who are well educated. Their being educated is due to the fact that Bahia is second to no other city in Brazil in ecclesiastical institutions and church schools."

"They found the docks piled high with merchandise of all descriptions and negro stevedores and porters were in evidence everywhere."

"Business is certainly humming here," observed Frank. "And the blacks are as big and burly as one could imagine."

An American "dude" leaves Bahia on the same ship with the boys. The boys give him a bad time. They dress up a monkey in baby clothes, hide him in the dude's cabin and "set up" the dude.

"The black folks are so nice-looking," put in Darry, with a wink at his chums. "Didn't you think they were real beauties?"

"My gracious, no!" gasped the dude. "I—I detest them, don't you know."

"By the way," went on Darry, turning to Mark with another wink. "What became of that fat colored woman who came to the hotel looking for her lost baby? She didn't find that baby, did she?"

"I—I don't think so," answered Mark. He knew that Darry was up to some joke, but could not surmise what.

"She said some traveler had stolen her little baby," went on the fun-loving youth. "She thought the baby had been carried off to one of the ships in the harbor."

"That's rather interesting," said J. Langnack Green (the dude).

"It will be interesting for the person who carried off the baby—especially if the colored mother finds it out."

"A man who would carry off a baby, even a colored baby, ought to be hanged," came from Jake.

The boys "find" the baby and have the dude pretty badly shaken up with thoughts of retribution. They leave with the monkey who was getting tired



of the game.

"Say, but this is a rare good joke," observed Jake. "Best I ever saw."

"You can finish it up, Jake, if you wish," said Darry. "Play colored lady and go to the door and demand the baby."

"If there was one thing Hockley could do well it was to imitate the talk of a colored person, and he had often amused the boys at the academy by giving dialect recitations."

So Jake and Darry stood outside the dude's door. "I tell you, madam, the baby isn't down here," (Darry) said, loud enough for the dude to hear.

"Dun yo' tell me nuffin' like dat, chile," came from Jake in strong negro accents. "I'se gwine to fin' ma baby, do yo' heah? Dar's sumfin' a-tellin' me dat ma baby is right down in dis room." And so on.

"Madam, what do you-er-want?" asked Green in a shaky voice.

"Yo' know well enough what I wants, yo' mean white trash," answered Jake.

The boys play out the joke to the end and the dude is humiliated.

At Pernambuco the boys watched a vessel loading with cotton. "Negro stevedores were everywhere, and as they worked they sang in a low, monotonous chant that appeared to have no beginning or no ending. These negroes were but lightly clad. They perspired freely, and this caused their brownish bodies to glisten like polished metal.

"They seem to be happy," said Sam. "I wonder what they earn?"

"In days gone by negro labor down here was very cheap," answered the professor. "But to-day they earn almost as much as do the plantation hands in our own Southern States. Many of these negroes have Indian blood in their veins, and a small portion of them are more Indian than they are black."

J. Langnack Green doesn't like Pernambuco. "This is a beastly city," went on the dude. "Mostly all black folks, and they stare at one so rudely. And what do you think? I had my shoes polished by one negro, and I had scarcely walked a block when an imp of a boy came up and covered one shoe with mud."

The Black doesn't do too well in several books of this series. The references to such occupations as stevedoring, mining and shoe-shining are presumed factual. The comical little negro boy with his two rows of pure white ivories was a pretty standard stereotype. The average Indian and negro was lazy. The stevedores sang and were happy. The attitude towards blacks as shown in the whole "stolen black baby" incident is degrading. Even though the "colored woman" is apparently in a position to have a stateroom on the ship, has brought along a hired detective and has no qualms about calling the supposed abductor "mean white trash" she is comic relief. The references to the Blacks of Bahia shows an awareness of differences but contains the inference that if these Blacks are superior many others of the race are pretty inferior.

Let us examine two of Stratemeyer's science fiction books for references to Blacks.

The *Young Naval Captain*, written in 1900, concerns a war of all nations which takes place in 1936. America has been attacked by the world. The hero, Oscar Pelham, has sneaked aboard an enemy British ship. "As Oscar took a step forward, a negro suddenly appeared, from another stateroom."

"Hi, you—" began the negro, when Oscar caught him by the throat.

"Silence! if you value your life!" muttered the young captain of the new Holland. "Say another word and I will kill you!"

"The negro was powerful, and instead of keeping silent he tried to throw Oscar off. Both went down to the floor and the negro strove to cry out.



"It was a fatal move.

"Down came the keen knife, straight into the negro's body, and he lay still where he had fallen.

"Oscar withdrew the bloody blade with a shudder. He hated to take human life thus, but it had been rendered absolutely necessary."

In *The Wizard of the Sea*, written 1895, three boys are having some problems with the Whites. Their sloop had been run down by the ship *Golden Cross* whose captain's name was *Savage*. So was the captain. Mont (principal hero) was being flogged when the process was interrupted to rescue another castaway from a floating chicken coop. He turned out to be Dr. Homer Woddle, the Secretary of the Society for the Exploration of the Unknown Parts of the World. His ship had been sunk by a giant submarine monster. Oddly enough, the submarine monster soon appeared in the neighborhood and Dr. Woddle and the three boys set out in a small boat to "lay the mighty brute low." The brute objected, rammed the ship, killed all on board and swamped the boat containing the four. "Mont found himself struggling in the sea, and wondered what had become of his companions."

"Hang those monsters of the deep," he said to himself; I don't like them."

He is hardly to be blamed. Needless to say the four are rescued by the monster which turns out to be a submarine manned by a mysterious Captain Vindex and a crew of 12 Blacks. The submarine was built "on a desert island in the Pacific. I had the various parts brought in a vessel that belonged to me from various parts of the world, and the twelve negroes who are now with me were my only workmen."

Our heroes meet Captain Vindex and one of the crew:

"Of the two who had entered one was a negro, with intelligent but flat face, and short, wooly hair. The other was a tall, handsome white man, with keen, searching eyes that looked into the very soul."

John Stumpton or Stump, the hired lad and devoted follower of Mont keeps exclaiming that, "I know I'm only an odd boy," and proves it regularly. He is determined to break out of the submarine.

"If four Americans aren't a match for a lot of niggers, and one Unknown who can't speak any language, and doesn't belong to any country at all, it's time we shut up shop!" went on Stump.

"At that moment the door opened, and the negro who had before appeared entered. Stump instantly threw himself upon him, and, seizing his throat with his two hands, held him so tightly as almost to strangle him. But being a powerful man, he soon disengaged himself, and a fearful struggle ensued between them."

"Help, help!" cried the negro, in excellent English."

Stumps actions are hardly fitting from one whose life has just been saved but fitting of Stump. The crew's English deteriorates rapidly in later pages.

"What's your name?" asked Mont.

"Me name One, massa."

"One!"

"Yes, massa. There twelve slaves on board this ship, and all have figure names, me One, other nigger Two, other Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, and so on up to Twelve."

The dialogue deteriorates also.

"Will massa have some oysters stewed in whale's milk?" he asked; "or some jam made of sea anemones?"

Later, the group is attacked by savages known as Papouans. "They were tall, handsome men, with erect bearing, their features well chiseled. In their ears they wore rings of bone."

The Captain is about to resume the voyage.

"And the niggers?" said Mont.

"The Papouans?" replied the captain, shrugging his shoulders, . . ."  
(and apparently correcting Mont for his choice of words.)

This problem was simply solved by electrifying the ship and giving the natives a shocking time. The rest of the adventures proceed in a manner strongly reminiscent of Jules Verne and need not concern us. The points which can be noted here are that the entire crew is Black yet capable of building a fantastic submarine and operating it under the direction of an eccentric white captain. They use deep sea diving outfits for underwater exploration and perform their duties as well as anyone could be expected to. They are neither cowards, villains nor fools although their dialect leaves something to be desired.

The three Prep School Series—Rover Boys, Putnam Hall and Dave Porter—have many but generally minor references to Blacks.

The comic relief and scapegoat of the boys' tricks at Putnam Hall is Peleg Snuggers, general utility man. He is a pretty simple person and not particularly capable. He is also white. Blacks are found as cooks and waiters. In *Putnam Hall Rebellion* (1909) the boys are being starved by Josiah Crabtree, villainous teacher, but have outwitted the mangement and stolen considerable food. Crabtree is investigating.

"We are following your ordars, sah," declared the head waiter. "Right or wrong, we are following 'em."

"Don't you think I am in the right?" demanded Josiah Crabtree, sourly. At this the colored man shrugged his shoulders.

"That is fo' Cap'n Putnam to say, sah."

"Ha! then you side with boys, eh?"

"I ain't sidin' at all, say. I obeys orders, that's all, sah."

When a watch is stolen in *Putnam Hall Mystery* (1911) suspicion falls on the servants who are both Black and White. Crabtree comments, "Perhaps some of the new colored help took the watch. . . ." Crabtree doesn't like Blacks but then he doesn't like anybody. It develops that the watch was stolen by a wicked white Putnam Hall student.

Jackson Lemond was the white stage driver of Oak Hall and butt of all kinds of jokes by Dave Porter and his friends. "He was invariably called Horsehair because of the hairs which always clung to his clothing."

This series finds Blacks in such occupations as pullman porter, waiter, "man of all work," manager of a hotel garage and livery driver. The roles are minor. The attitude seems to be that these were simply typical occupations for the Blacks at that time.

Washington Bones, driver of the big sleigh which was stranded in a blizzard came in for commendation in *Dave Porter and His Double*. (1916)

"What do you think it is, Wash, a blizzard?"

"Dat's jest what dis is, boss. And my opinion is it's gwine to be a heap sight wo'se before it gits bettah," added the driver.

The boys deferred to Wash's judgment and waited two days to make the return trip.

"Occasionally, when the turnout was on a dangerous slant, the girls would shriek and the boys would hold their breath; but each time Washington Bones was equal to the occasion and brought them through safely."

They finally reached home and Dave commented, "We can be thankful that we got through so easily, Jessie, Wash is certainly some driver."

The Rover Boys series is similar as far as the role of the Black is concerned. Peleg Snuggers is still general utility man and butt of the boys'



tricks at Putnam Hall. Blacks are still waiters. The student body and faculty are all white. A notable variation, however, is the introduction of Alexander Pop. He probably comes the closest to the standard negro stereotype of the "faithful, devoted and superstitious servant" in Stratmeyer's writings. However, looking beyond the stereotypes, Aleck is capable, honest and self-respecting in spite of his referring to himself as a "nigger" and "coon."

He is first a waiter at Putnam Hall. In *The Rover Boys at School* (1899) Aleck "was a short, fat fellow, the very embodiment of good nature." He is described differently in *The Rover Boys in Camp* (1904). "A box wagon came dashing up to the depot platform, with a tall, good-looking colored man on the seat."

In *The Rover Boys in the Jungle* (1899) Aleck is accused of robbing the boys of Putnam Hall. The loot has been planted in his trunk.

"I dun reckon sumbuddy put up a job on dis poah coon, sah," he continued ruefully.

"I believe the job was put up by yourself," answered Captain Putnam sternly. "If you are guilty you had better confess."

"A stormy war of words followed. Alexander Pop stoutly declared himself innocent, but in the face of the proofs discovered the master of the Hall would not listen to him.

"Many were astonished to learn that he was thought guilty, but a few declared that a 'coon wasn't to be trusted anyway."

"Niggers are all thieves," said Jim Caven. "I never yet saw an honest one."

"I don't believe you!" burst out Tom. "Pop's a first-rate fellow, and the captain has got to have more proof against him before I'll believe him guilty." "Yes, I think he's as honest as you are!" burst out Tom, . . .

Jim Caven attacks Tom and they begin to fight.

"I'm going to give you the worst thrashing you ever had," said Caven, but in rather a nervous tone.

"All right, Caven, go ahead and do it," cried Tom. "I will stand up for Aleck Pop, and—there you are!" The fight is inconclusive, Aleck is hauled off to jail but escapes and "ships on one of the outward-bound ocean vessels."

At about the same time the Rovers made a trip to Africa to look for their father. They rescued Aleck in mid-ocean and accompanied them to the Congo as valet for the crowd. Aleck doesn't do so badly in Africa. He thwarts a plot against Randolph Rover and the boys. He "had his ear clipped by a bullet from Captain Villaire's pistol" but did his part in the fighting. Josiah Crabtree knocked Dick Rover into a gully and almost killed him but Dick escaped. When he met Crabtree again he told him, "I am going to thrash you to the very best of my ability, and after that, if I meet you again I'll—I'll—"

"Dun shoot him on sight," suggested Aleck.

When the party is surrounded and attacked by black savages, "I think a concerted volley from our pistols and guns will check their movements," came from Rand.

"Dat's de talk!" cried Aleck. "Give it to 'em hot!" They did and routed King Susko and the savages.

It is eventually discovered that the white cadet Jim Caven had stolen the boys jewelry and "The captain (Putnam) apologized handsomely to Aleck for the way he had treated the colored man."

"Alexander Pop remained in the employ of the two elder Rovers," however, for the remainder of the 27 books in the series. Mr. Rover thought enough of his ability in *The Rover Boys Out West* (1900) that he sent him to

Cedarville for protection.

"I wish Aleck to be near you," wrote Mr. Rover. "It alarms me greatly to hear of the trouble that you are having."

Aleck also thought highly of the Rover Boys. ". . . dun lub dem Rober boys, ain't no ust ter talk," Pop would say. "Dem is de most up-to-date boys in de world, dat's wot and da did dis yeah niggah a good turn wot he ain't forgittin' in a hurry, too." (*Rover Boys on the Great Lakes—1901*).

When the boys returned home in *The Rover Boys in the Mountains* (1902) "There was a warm greeting from Randolph Rover also, and then the boys turned indoors, to greet faithful Alexander Pop and the others who worked about the place."

"Yo' is a sight fo' soah eyes, 'deed yo' is, boys," said the colored man. "I can't tell you how much I's missed yo'!" And his face shone like a piece of polished ebony.

Andy Rover was be-devilling Aleck in *The Rover Boys Shipwrecked* (1924)

"Say, you're only jokin', Massa Andy. You is jest like your dad before you. He was always botherin' the life out o' dis coon. But he was a nice boy—yes, sah, he was, an' he's a nice man, too," added Aleck, hastily."

In the last book of the series, *The Rover Boys Winning a Fortune* (1926) Aleck gives "Massah Jack" a rabbit's foot for luck. He is also frightened by what he thinks is a ghost.

"Der am a ghost in de barn, Mrs. Rober!" was the scared reply. "A great big white ghost!"

The ghost turns out to be one of the boys, covered with a white garden spray.

Both a villainous and a lazy negro appear in *The Rover Boys Series*. In *The Rover Boys on the Plains* (1906) they have trouble with a "burly negro called Watermelon Pete." After filling a carpetbag with silverware belonging to the Rover entourage he is discovered by Aleck Pop and the valuables recovered but Watermelon Pete escapes.

He next appears as a member of a counterfeiting gang. Dick Rover is captured by the counterfeitters.

"Why don't you finish him off, Puller?" came from the negro. "Ain't nobody else around."

Help arrives and the tables are turned. Watermelon Pete is shot in the thigh and ends up in jail.

*The Rover Boys at Big Bear Lake* (1923) take Jeff Wilson along to the lake "to do the cooking and some of the other work."

"Has Jeff ever been up there?" asked Fred in a low tone.

"Oh, yes. He's been up there several times. That's one reason dad wanted us to have him along. He said Jeff could show us where the best fishing places were and all that sort of thing. Besides, Jeff has quite a reputation when it comes to serving fish. That's his specialty. There's only one trouble with Jeff. He's very lazy, and apt to go to sleep if you give him half a chance. Otherwise, he isn't a half bad sort."

"Well, Jeff certainly knows how to fry fish," remarked Jack, after he had eaten his supper. "I never ate fish that tasted better."

"That's the one thing that Jeff can do," answered Gif. "Otherwise, I think he's about as lazy and worthless as any nigger I ever met. Privately, I wish we could get rid of him."

Later Jeff goes to sleep and burns up the supper and the boys dump him into the water.

His face fell, but then, of a sudden, he turned around savagely. "I don't care! I didn't mean to burn that supper up! You was so long comin' I jest



thought I'd rest a minute. You didn't have no call to flop me into the water."

"You're lazy and good-for-nothing, Jeff," answered Gif sternly. "The best thing you can do is to get out of this camp."

The Black is shown in many situations in Stratemeyer's individual stories. Representative examples follow:

A key to a closet was missing in *The Missing Tin Box* (1893). Hardwick, one of the villains, comments, "Perhaps Jackson carted it off. He's an odd sort of a coon." Jackson is apparently the janitor or caretaker of the gambling establishment. There is also a negro doorman.

In a later episode the hero, who has been bound and is being taken for a ride, throws himself out of the coach. He is found unconscious beside the road and one of the Samaritans goes for help. He returned "with a negro and a white man. They lifted him up and took him to the road-house. Later, ". . . the negro who had helped to pick Hal up came in."

"A feller wid an empty coach jess drove up," he said, somewhat excitedly.

"It must be Macklin!" (the white Irish villain who had taken him for a ride) exclaimed Hal. "Where is he?"

"Jess gitting ready ter cum in, I reckon, sah."

*The Young Auctioneers* (1894) has several references to Blacks which need to be considered in the total context of the book. The young auctioneers have a bad scrape with 3 tramps who try to hold them up. The three "would-be plunderers" are white. A jewelry store is robbed by Old Joe Yedley. He is captured and sent to jail for one year. He is white. A thief steals their horse and wagon and goods. He is captured and confined. He is white.

Then, in Easton, Pa., among the crowd in their auction house "were four tall and rather ugly-looking colored men. They shoved their way forward rudely, causing some timid customers to leave in a hurry, and began to laugh and joke among themselves in a loud and coarse manner."

"I am afraid we are going to have trouble with those chaps," whispered Matt to his partner. "They have been drinking, and they are out for a lark."

They do. Two of the men broke one of the show-cases and denied it.

"I won't pay for nuffin!" growled the ringleader of the quartet. "I dun reckon somebody else in the crowd broke the glass."

"Cos da did," replied another of the colored men. "Maybe yo' think yo' kin lay it on us just because we is colored, hey?"

"Not at all; a colored man can be as much of a gentleman as any one—if he wishes to be," put in Andy.

"Do youse mean to insinuate dat we ain't gen'men?" questioned one of the crowd roughly.

"You are not gentlemen when you break glass and refuse to pay for it," returned Andy. "That glass is worth at least a dollar, and unless it is paid for, somebody will be handed over to the police."

"Huh! do yo' fink yo' kin scare us, boss?"

"Yo' say another word an' we'll do up de hull place!" "We is as good as any white trash, remember dat!"

One thing led to another and the ring-leader "made a movement as if to strike the young auctioneer in the face." At this point the police arrived, the Blacks paid for the showcase and left. But this wasn't the end of the problem. On their way to Bethlehem they ran upon "three of the colored men who had created the disturbance in the store. . . ." Matt is attacked but escapes.

"Those negroes!" gasped Matt . . . "Come on, don't wait, for they are three to two, and they are just drunk enough to be ugly as sin!"

They stopped at the next farmhouse to ask directions. "By the way,"

he went on, "do you know anything of the negroes that live in the cottage back a ways?"

"The woman's face lost its smile and she sighed. "Yes, I know **them** only too well," she replied. "They have stolen so many of our chickens and so much garden truck that my husband is going to make a complaint **against** them. I wish they would leave the neighborhood."

There are several interesting points in these scenes. There are more white villains than black. The Blacks are not shown as comics or fools or stupid. They are under the influence of drink which is at least partly responsible for their actions. They are a pretty worthless bunch who steal chickens and fresh vegetables but certainly not as bad as the white villains who end up in jail. They are also aggressive and dangerous and as worthy protagonists for our heroes as the white villains. The most interesting dialogue, particularly for 1894, is the references to "gentlemen" and the inference that it is "behavior" and not "color" that makes the difference.

In *Larry the Wanderer* (1894) we find that "As he approached the house he saw an old colored man sitting on the porch bench, talking to Howard Bruin." (A Black sitting on the front porch with the wealthy white owner?!)

"Larry, here's a messenger to see you," said the artist. "This is Abe Jackson. He works for Mrs. Noxwell."

"Am yo' de young gen'man wot saved Miss Maud?" asked the negro, rising.

"Well, I did something of that sort," replied Larry modestly.

"Den, Mrs. Noxwell tole me to tell yo' dat she'd be mighty pleased if yo' would cum up to de house and call on her."

Abe wasn't afraid to speak his mind about his employer. "She am a werry close pussun," said Abe Jackson. "I reckon she's about de closes' pussun yo' kin meet in a day's trabels."

He had additional blunt comments. Outside of the ever-present dialect there is nothing to distinguish him from a white in a similar situation. He doesn't even call Larry "sah."

Larry is later looking for a thief. He "came in sight of a tumbled-down shanty, where an old colored woman was sitting in the open doorway, smoking a clay pipe."

"Good-afternoon, aunty," said Larry. "Did you see anything of a man on horseback along here?"

"Yes, sah, jes went by," was the reply.

"Riding fast?"

"Tol'able fast, sah."

"All right. Thanks . . ."

"Fully half a mile was covered and still he had not come in sight of Luke Boughton. Then another shanty appeared in view, in front of which three half-grown white children were playing."

Both Blacks and Whites lived in shanties. This portrayal apparently was not intended to ridicule but to show life as it was.

Pickles Johnsing plays a prominent part in *The Tour of the Zero Club* (1894). He ". . . was a stout, round-faced colored boy, with big red lips, and teeth which reminded one very forcibly of double-blank dominoes set in twin rows. He was a very willing and decent sort of a young darky, and had many friends in the little river town in which my story for the present is located." His description is not flattering although his behavior is.

Our heroes invite him to ride with them in a toboggan race. The villains are annoyed.

"Humph! if he ain't going to take that coon on the trip!" sneered **Peta Sully**.



"You ain't racing niggers, are you, Pete?" questioned one of his followers.

"I don't know as I am," returned Pete Sully, slowly.

He walked over to where Harry sat on his toboggan. "I expected to race white fellows," he remarked, sourly.

"Pickles is all right," said Jack Bascoe. "He's the dark horse to win. If you are going to race, get ready, for Harry isn't going to wait all night for you."

So the boys race and Pickles does his part. "Sit jess a little moah to de front," was Pickles' suggestion, and it was immediately acted upon.

Somewhat later the boys get into a snowball fight. ". . . Jack and Andy Bascoe had just arrived on the scene, followed up by Pickles Johnsing, the colored youth. These three were not slow to take in the situation, and they sailed in vigorously."

"Dis am most lubly sport!" cried Pickles. "How yo' like dat, Sully? Ki! hi! Ain't dat jess elegant, Dixon? An' heah's one fo' you, Len Spencer, fo' callin' me a coon!"

"And Pickles rushed to the front, followed by Andy and Jack, and compelling Sully and his crowd to retreat in spite of themselves."

This is pretty heady stuff for 1894—a black boy who resents being called a coon and leads white boys in an attack on other whites. He does even better later on. The villains had stolen the boys' ice boat, Pickles had put them on the track of it and gone along to help get it back. They had recovered the ice boat and were preparing to sail home ". . . when Sully rushed up and tried to hit Jack in the head with his fist."

"Pickles sprang forward and pushed the bully's arm aside. Then he let out with his own fist, and down went Sully flat on his back, while the leicle sailed off, leaving Dixon and Spencer staring at the fate of their leader in dumb amazement."

The boys want to reward him and he pleads to be taken on their trip. "Say, why can't yo' fellahs take me along!" he burst out suddenly. "Ebery first-class camp hab got to hab a cook an' general util'ty man around . . ." "I ain't much wid a gun, but I kin trap t'ings, and yo' all knows wot I kin do fishin' an' spearin'. It an't fo' de likes of yo' to wash de dishes and sech, an'—an', to tell de truf, I wants to go powerful bad!" "An' I kin take my banjo and mouf harmonica along," went on the colored youth. "Da will come in mighty handy-like to help kill de long evenings."

The boys like Pickles, "who had always stood by them and done them more than one favor," and include him on the excursion. As they were sailing down the river they heard "a dismal howl that caused nearly every one to jump in alarm."

"My gracious! what was that?" exclaimed Andy.

"Dat must be a ghost, suah!" cried Pickles, as he sprang away from the voice.

It turned out to be the bark of a fox. As noted later in the book, "Pickles was a firm believer in spirits."

The following day the trip began in earnest. "Dis am de most glorious trip wot ever was, by golly!" cried Pickles, as he shoved on ahead of the rest, dragging the sled behind him. "Dis coon is werry glad he is alibe jess about now, boys!" He can call himself a coon but no one else can.

"And in the exuberance of his spirits, Pickles broke out into an old darky refrain about the history and death of a wonderful 'Blue-tail Fly,' the chorus to which was so catchy that they were soon every one of them singing it."

"I'm glad he came along," whispered Jack to Harry. "He'll make days we can't go out seem shorter."

"So am I, Jack, Pickles is just the fellow for this crowd."

The boys go hunting and are attacked by wolves. "Finally (the wolf) sprang at Jack, but just then came an unexpected shot from one side. It was so close it caused the wolf to drop almost at the boy's feet. He gave a yelp, turned over once or twice, and was dead."

"They looked around and saw Pickles standing there, a smoking shotgun in his hands, and grinning from ear to ear."

"Dat's de time dat wolf got dun up fo' keeps," remarked the colored youth.

"Good for you, Pickles!" cried Jack, gratefully. "You saved my life!"

In a later episode the boys are taken for chicken thieves. Andy asked indignantly, "Do we look like chicken thieves?"

"Wall, I reckon a coon makes a good hen lifter!" laughed the smallest of the farmers, with a nod toward Pickles, which made the colored youth mad clear to his heels.

"Look heah!" he cried out, shaking his gun threateningly; "yo' can't consult me dat way, yo' low down white trash! A chicken lifter, indeed! Moah likely yo' is one yourself!"

"What's thet? Don't yeou talk tew me!" roared the farmer, bristling up like a turkey cock. Maybe yeou don't know who yeou be a-talkin' to?"

"I don't know, nor care!" retorted Pickles. "I ain't no chicken lifter, an' if yo' go fo' to say so, you'll git yo'self into a big muss wid me!"

These are pretty strong words for a black boy of that time but Pickles refuses to be "typical." There are certain stereotypes of the period in the book, the description of Pickles, Pickle's fear of ghosts, the idea of blacks and chicken stealing and the love of singing, among others, but generally speaking Pickles appears in a very favorable light. He goes hunting with Boxy and the two of them shoot a deer. He shows the boys how to spear fish and how to make and use traps. He is unlettered and uncouth, perhaps, but he is a real person.

An unusual hero also appeared in *The Young Oarsmen of Lakeview* (1895) Blumpo Brown is part Indian and part Black. "And now what of Blumpo Brown, you ask? There is little to tell at this point of our story concerning that semi-colored individual. He was alone in the world, and had lived in Lakeview some ten years." "He was a very perculiar youth, often given to making the most ridiculous remarks, . . ."

Blumpo wants to go on a camping trip with the boys. "I'm not rich, nor eddicated, as you call it, and all that, but I can hunt and fish, and so on, as good as the next feller, can't I?"

"You certainly can," put in Jerry, who had for a long time had a strange liking for the homeless youth.

"And I am as willing as the next one to do my full share of camp work—washing dishes and the like," went on Blumpo. "You ain't cut out for that," he added, . . .

The upshot of the matter is that Blumpo goes on the trip. The "homeless youth" is a strange mixture of cowardice, bluster and bravery. He lapses into dialect on occasion, particularly when frightened. The boys go to "Hermit Island." While camping there they discover the hermit.

"All of the boys stared at him in blank amazement. He was a reddish-black individual, with snow white hair and long flowing beard." "Blumpo grew so frightened that he immediately fell on his knees."

"De voodoo doctor, suah!" he muttered.

"Like many other ignorant people, he was very superstitious and believed in charms and voodooism."



The boys talk with the hermit who speaks excellent English. It shortly develops that he is Blumpo's father. He has become a hermit because he thinks Blumpo is dead. The boys "found that the old man had quite a comfortable place among the rocks. It was elaborately furnished, showing that the hermit was well-to-do."

"Blumpo could scarcely believe his ears. His face began to expand, and a smile broke out on it, the like of which had never before been seen. He was a homeless waif no longer. He had found a father."

The hermit decided "he would build a cabin down by the lakeside and there he and Blumpo could live like ordinary people."

"I have several thousand dollars saved up," he said, "so we will not want for anything. I will buy a boat, and Blumpo can make a living by letting her out to pleasure parties."

"Dat will suit me exactly," cried Blumpo.

"But you must also go to school in the winter," went on Daniel Brown. "And you must drop that dialect, and not say dat for that."

Not only does Blumpo's Black-Indian father speak perfect English but he expects Blumpo to learn to do the same, the inference being that education, not race, is responsible for the dialect.

When the boys left for Lakeview the hermit went along, "and created some surprise when he appeared on the streets of Lakeview with Blumpo, his son." "All the boys were glad that the homeless youth had found a father, who would endeavor to make something out of the good-natured and honest lad."

Blumpo did well with his boat. "Blumpo is making money," said Harry, "and I am glad of it."

"So am I," replied our hero. "He is an odd sort of chap, but his heart is of gold."

The camping story *Gun and Sled* (1895) has no blacks but the casting of an Irish boy is interesting. It is similar to *The Tour of the Zero Club and Young Oarsmen of Lakeview*. Danny also wanted badly to go camping.

"By jinks! it wouldn't be a bad idea to take Danny along," remarked Dick, who had noticed how the Irish lad's face had fallen.

"He couldn't pay his share," interposed Leander.

"I know that. But we might squeeze him in, and he could do the dirty work—washing dishes and the like."

"Dick Wilbur was a whole-souled fellow and hated to have fun in which his friends could not share." So they take Danny along.

There was stealing in the dressing-room at the ball grounds in *Rival Bicyclists* (1895). Joe "suspected a negro lad named Jeff Lumson, who was in the habit of hanging around the club on the watch to do errands and thus pick up a few cents." Jeff "bought three live crabs and left them in their inside coat pockets." "Suddenly a loud yell was heard coming from the shed."

"Come on!" shouted Joe. "I have the sneak!"

"The umpire called time, and all started forward. At the door to the shed they came upon Jeff the negro. He was a sight to behold. His hands were covered blood, and to his right thumb hung two of the crabs."

"Help! murder! Take dem off!" he shrieked.

"Jeff, what are you doing with my crabs?" demanded Joe sternly.

"Ain't doin' nuffin', 'pon my word, Joe!" groaned the colored boy. "Take dem off before I'se bit to pieces!"

"Do you own up that you are the sneak we've been looking for?" asked Washton.

"Ow, let me go! I'se—"

"Own up, or we'll let the crabs have another inning at you!" said Charley Osborne.

"I owns up; yes, I does!" groaned Jeff. "Let me go an' I'll gib you back all de stuff I took."

Jeff was only a minor rogue and could not compare with the whites of this story in villainy. His ability along these lines, however, was apparently quite adequate until the crab incident. He certainly was no stupid comic.

Mark Dale of Mark Dale's Stage Venture fame had a bit of a run-in with a Black in an 1895 serial. He had previously been involved with a rascally lawyer, (white), two wicked actors (white) and assorted miscellaneous villains (all white). He was robbed by an Italian and imprisoned by a Jewish pawnbroker. He had his problems. However, when he is searching for Marie Oldham, the heroine who has been abducted by the white rascals he finds her in the custody of "Sal Peters."

"She de old colored gal was run out of de town half-a-dozen times."

"She is a bad woman, then?"

"Der wust yer ever seen, boss. She just as lief as not hit yer wid a stove plate or a brick or anything she kin lay hands on. She drove her husband away more than a year ago, and not one of de neighbors kin git along wid her."

It was a rough fight. Mark had great difficulty overcoming Sal Peters who almost brained him with her cane but finally escaped with Marie. At that point the villainous actor (white) showed up again and sat on Mark while Sal Peters recaptured Marie. Provisionally Mr. Oldham appeared and, "A swift blow hurled the colored woman in the gutter, and Marie was free." Then he rescued Mark, they had the villain arrested and sent back to prison again.

Sal Peters was no worse than "Mother Caracas" an "old Italian woman" to whom the malefactors had previously entrusted Marie. "Her face was wrinkled, her teeth gone, and her whole manner betokened avarice and cruelty." "No pen could describe the sufferings the little actress had endured since she had been abducted."

What is the significance of this? Racially, the Italian was as bad as the Black. There is no thought of the Black woman being incompetent or amusing. She happens to be a villain but an experienced and competent villain to whom the white abductors of Marie could safely entrust her. Again, she is a person, she is a worthy opponent, and she happens to be black.

In *The Three Young Ranchmen* (1895) the Winthrop boys are given a good deal of trouble by a gang of horse thieves. One of them is a Black named Jeff Jones. Old Ike Watson, the hunter, expresses his opinion of them.

"Thet Saul Mangle ought to be strung up, ye mean. And Darry Nodley and that coon, Jeff Jones, ain't much better."

The horse thieves are caught raiding a ranch. "There, in the gloom, they saw two men struggling violently. They were Dottery and the negro, Jeff Jones." Jones was captured, but not easily.

"Dis am werry hard on a poah man," moaned the negro. He was fearfully frightened, for he knew full well how stern was the justice usually meted out to horse thieves in that section of the country."

Eventually Jeff tells the boys about their missing uncle and the boys try to help him. "This colored man told us about our uncle and Captain Grady of his own free will," said Paul. "So, if you can be a little easy on him on that account I wish you would be." At their request Jeff was held as a prisoner instead of being turned over to the vigilance committee.

At the end of the story "The colored man, Jeff Jones, was, by the advice of Chet and Paul, allowed to go his own way on promise to turn over a new leaf."



Points to note here are, again, the casting of a Black as an equal partner in the gang and a capable and resourceful desperado. He is concerned about being lynched as a horse thief but it is because of his actions, not his color.

References to Blacks appear occasionally in unexpected places. In *To Alaska for Gold* (1899) both the heroes and rascals are white. Fred Dobson, the Squire's runaway son from Maine, follows our heroes to Alaska arriving in pitiful shape.

"I came up by the way of the Chilkoot Pass," he said, when he felt able to speak. "I joined a party I met in Juneau, a crowd of men from Chicago, and they promised to see me through if I would do my share of the work. But the work was too hard for me, and they treated me like a dog, and at Baker's Creek they kicked me out of camp and compelled me to shift for myself." "...Cooking was the one thing I learned coming up here," Fred explained. "There was a negro in the party who had been a chef in a Chicago hotel; and he was the one soul in the crowd that treated me half decently."

Here is a black who had apparently held a responsible job, who was an equal member with the whites of his gold rush party, who was kind to the castaway when the whites were abusive and who took time to teach him to cook.

In *Poor But Plucky* (1895) thieves rob the sawmill.

"I'll call old Peter." "...Old Peter Luffkins, an aged negro who did odd jobs about the lumber yard, slept in a little room off the kitchen. He was soon acquainted with the situation, and the lad told him to arouse the housekeeper and inform her also." The group tackle the thieves. They escape although "old Peter took the opportunity to fire, but without effect."

In the same book a surveying party was leaving on a trip. "Besides the four there was a negro named Jeff who was to cook for the crowd. He was as jolly as could be, and kept all smiling over his quaint sayings."

The ship *Vixen* had two negro cooks in *Lost in the Land of Ice* (1900). Bob Baxter, who had been shanghied on board the *Vixen* broke loose and appropriated some food. A cook finds it missing.

"Who dun took dat steak an' dat pie!" he roared, in a bull-like voice. "I lef' dat steak dar less dan ten minits ago! Hi, you, Peter Jackson, did you dun took dat steak?"

He continues in this vein and "began to scold in such a loud voice that Captain Fenlick's attention was attracted."

"What's up Mose?" asked the master of the ship.

"Dun got a t'ief on board, dat's wot's up!" howled the cook. "Eat up ma steak an' ma pie, and now been in de stuff wot's cookin'!"

Mose is a man of righteous indignation and apparently strong character. He later quarrels with the captain, exposes him, and the captain goes to prison.

"Jeff was the ship's cook,—a tall, fat mulatto, much given to singing and dancing whenever the occasion allowed," in *Under Dewey at Manila* (1898). "The only sound that broke the stillness was the voice of Jeff, as he prepared meals and sang his plantation melodies. He had one song in particular, relating the mishaps of 'My Gal Susannah!' which he seemed to be never weary of repeating. The darky was the only one satisfied to let the calm take care of itself."

Jeff appeared again in *At the Fall of Port Arthur* (1905). Captain Ponsberry interviewed "Jeff, the colored cook, who, as of old, was singing gayly to himself among the pots and pans of the ship's galley," about complaints of the food. (The food had been tampered with by a white villain.)

"Was it thoroughly cooked?"

"Yes, sah—I don't 'low nuffin to go from dis yere galley 'less it am well cooked."

"Are your pots and kettles clean?"

"Yes, sah—yo' can see fo' yourself, sah."

"The captain did see, and moreover he knew that Jeff was usually a careful and conscientious culinary artist who always gave the men the best his stock afforded."

The stereotypes are obvious but the occupation is reasonable for that time and Jeff does his job well. Other Black cooks appear in many books including *By Pluck, Not Luck* (1895), *Between Boer and Briton* (1900) and *Bound to be an Electrician* (1896) to name only a few.

*The Rover Boys at Big Horn Ranch* (1922) includes an Irish cook, Bridget Mulligan, and a Chinese cook, Hop Lung, "a pretty good sort of a chap, too," but no Black cooks.

In *Two Young Lumbermen* (1903) Jeff, a negro, had charge of half the cooking and a French-Canadian had charge of the other half. "The cook was a burly negro named Jeff, his full name being Jefferson Jackson. Jeff was usually good-natured, but when the men hurried him too much for their victuals he would often growl back at them."

A negro is a member of a whaling expedition in *First at the North Pole* (1909). "...a whaler had gone to pieces in the ice. Some Esquimaux brought the word, and said that a crew of five white men and one negro were on the shore to the northwestward." The ship had been caught in the ice, drifted for months and was finally destroyed. The crew went ashore and did what they could to save themselves. The negro presumably did no more nor less than the others. He was a member of the crew, did his job and was rescued.

In *Four Boy Hunters* (1906) the white boy heroes are stealing fruit from Mr. Lundy's orchard. While he is objecting they hear his wife scream. As they hurried to the house, "they saw a burly negro leap a rail fence not far away."

When his wife recovered from a faint she said, "The big negro—he wanted something to eat, and then he got saucy and he picked up your watch from the mantelpiece—"

The boys hunt for the thief and find he has stolen their boat as well. They borrow another boat and catch up with the negro.

"Stop!" roared Simon Lundy. "Give me back my watch!"

"Don't yo' dar to follow me!" yelled the negro, and showed a big horse-pistol. "If yo' do, somebody is dun gwine to git shot."

He got away but the boys got their boat back. Later they stumble on the negro after he has robbed their camp. "He was a shiftless mortal and half intoxicated and did not care much what became of himself." The boys tied him up and took him to jail.

This Black is also cast as a rascal but certainly not a comic caricature. And here again it is worth noting that in *Guns and Snowshoes* (1907), the next volume of the series, the boys again have their camp robbed, in much the same manner, by a most unpleasant tramp named Kiddy Leech who is white.

In the same volume we find this passage:

"Here comes old Mammy Shrader!" chided Snap, presently. "We must be careful not to hit her."

"The woman he referred to was old and feeble and very short sighted. She had a faded shawl over her shoulders and carried a market basket on one arm." Possibly to our surprise we find that old Mammy Shrader is an elderly white woman.

Another unusual characterization appears in *When Santiago Fell* (1899) "The principal man living in the place (the small village of Molino in Cuba) was a Spaniard named Curilos, a fellow who years before had been a sailor.



He was a comical fellow in the extreme and a good singer, accompanying himself in singing on a home-made guitar, a rough-looking instrument, but one very sweet in tone. How a sailor had ever settled there was a mystery to me, but there he was and apparently more than content."

Here we find a contented, comical singer with a home-made guitar who is white. But of course he is Spanish, too!

These quotations, selected from the boys books written by Edward Stratemeyer show a variety of attitudes. Some of the questions referred to in the beginning together with possible answers follow:

Is there a standard or common stereotype of the Black in Stratemeyer's books? There is not. There are brave blacks and cowardly blacks. There is a black hero at Bunker Hill and there are gallant black patriots in Cuba. There is also a black horse thief in Oklahoma and a black sneak thief in New York. A Black is treated in a major role in two of the books.

Is the Black portrayed as a comic character? Practically never, certainly no more so than his white counterparts. He is on some occasions cast in an unfavorable light. He may be shown occasionally as a devoted servant contented with his "place" but he is not pictured as a comic clown.

Is the Black shown as lazy? The quotations show only two actual examples of this. The trait is certainly not emphasized.

Does Stratemeyer use dialect as an indication of low mentality? No, he does not. Blumpo's father specifically refers to education as a means of eliminating dialect and improving speech. Jews, Italians, Germans and Irish all use dialect.

Is the Black portrayed as happy and carefree? Yes, to some extent. There are various references to singing, the playing of musical instruments and a relaxed attitude towards life.

Is the Black portrayed as doing menial work? Generally, yes, by modern standards although many exceptions have been quoted. By the standards of the day, however, as noted in the excerpt from the Life of McKinley the portrayals were intended to represent real life job opportunities for the Blacks. We must remember that so-called "menial work" was a way of life in this country for people of all races at that time.

Certainly there are stereotyped incidents but Stratemeyer shows a great deal of awareness of the Black as a person. His attitude seems basically friendly and positive. He is never vicious as Tarkington is. He undoubtedly reflects to some extent the benevolent paternalism of the kindly and enlightened White of that time, but this is a far cry from the stereotypes that Cohen and Deane discuss. There are a number of Black villains and there are a number of White villains. When cast as villains the Blacks perform as well as their White counterparts. Stratemeyer seems to take the Black seriously and certainly to be conscious of him. As noted earlier, Blacks appear in 92 of the 137 books used in the research.

To sum up, considering our original guidelines, we believe that Stratemeyer in his own writings of boys books appears as unusually objective and liberal for the times in his attitudes towards the Blacks.

#### Footnotes

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12. Comstock, Anthony, **Traps For The Young**, The Belknap Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1967.
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5. Soderbergh, Peter A., "The South in Juvenile Series Books, 1907-1917," "The Mississippi Quarterly," Vol. 27, No. 2, Spring, 1974.

(Chronological Listing of Boys BoBoks by Edward Stratmeyer on next page.)

## Dime Novel Collector's Bookshelf

**MONSIEUR LECOQ**, by Emile Gaboriau. Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick St., New York, N. Y. 10014. Introduction by E. F. Bleiler is worth the purchase of this book. Mr. Bleiler gives a short biographical sketch of Gaboriau and a check list of his works. Monsieur Lecoq was first published in the U. S. in 1879 and soon was being published in many of the paper back series then extant including dime novel format in the Old Cap Collier Library. Price \$3.50 in paperback. Illustrated with Old Cap Collier covers as well as contemporary story illustrations.

**THREE SUPERNATURAL NOVELS OF THE VICTORIAN PERIOD.** Edited by E. F. Bleiler. Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick St., New York, N. Y. 10014. \$4.00 in paperback. *The Haunted Hotel* by Wilkie Collins; *The Lost Stradivarius*, by J. Meade Falkner; *The Haunted House at Latchford*, Again, Mr. Bleiler's introduction is well worth the price of the book. These authors also found their way into the many paper book publications of the late 19th century.



## A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF BOYS BOOKS BY EDWARD STRATEMEYER FIRST PUBLISHED AS SERIALS

Book Title (Sub-title omitted)	First Published In	Dates First Published	Serial Author (Penname)	Book Publisher	Date of Book	Book Author (Pen Name)
1. Richard Dare's Venture	Argosy	1/91-3/91	Stratemeyer	Merriam	1894	Stratemeyer
2. A Young Inventor's Pluck	The Holiday	4/91-6/91	Stratemeyer	Saalfeld	1901	Winfield
3. True to Himself	Argosy	10/91-1/92	Stratemeyer	L & S (Merriam?)	1900 (1896?)	Stratemeyer
4. The Last Cruise of the Spitfire	Argosy	1/92-4/92	Stratemeyer	Merriam	1894	Stratemeyer
5. Fighting for His Own	Argosy	5/92-7/92	Winfield	Allison	1897	Stratemeyer
6. Reuben Stone's Discovery	Argosy	7/92-10/92	Stratemeyer	Merriam	1895	Stratemeyer
7. Oliver Bright's Search	Argosy	11/92-2/93	Winfield	Merriam	1895	Stratemeyer
8. The Missing Tin Box	Good News	4/93-6/93	Stratemeyer	Allison	1897	Winfield
9. Bob the Photographer	Good News	10/93-1/94	Stratemeyer	Wessels	1902	Winfield
10. Shorthand Tom the Reporter	Good News	2/94-4/94	Stratemeyer	Allison	1897	Stratemeyer
11. Tom Truxton's School Days (not proven)	Good News	5/94-6/94	Harvey Hicks	McKay	ca 1902	Lt. Lounsberry
12. Tom Truxton's Ocean Trip (not proven)	Good News	7/94-10/94	Harvey Hicks	McKay	ca 1902	Lt. Lounsberry
13. Joe the Surveyor	Good News	5/94-7/94	Stratemeyer	L & S	1903	Stratemeyer
14. Larry the Wanderer	Good News	8/94-11/94	Stratemeyer	L & S (Merriam?)	1904 (1896?)	Stratemeyer
15. Schooldays of Fred Harley	Good News	9/94-12/94	Winfield	Allison	1897	Winfield
16. The Young Auctioneers	Good News	12/94-3/95	Stratemeyer	Allison	1897	Stratemeyer
17. The Tour of the Zero Club	Good News	12/94-3/95	Harvey Hicks	McKay	1902	Bonehill
18. Mark Dale's Stage Venture	Good News	4/95-6/95	Mgr. Henry Abbott	McKay	1902	Winfield
19. The Young Bridgetender	Good News	8/95-11/95	Harvey Hicks	McKay	1902	Winfield
20. Neka, The Boy Conjuror	Good News	12/95-3/96	Mgr. Henry Abbott	McKay	1902	Bonehill
21. Leo, The Circus Boy	Young Sports of America	5/95-6/95	P. T. Barnum Jr.	Allison	1897	Bonehill
22. Young Oarsmen of Lakeview	Y. Sports Am.	6/95-7/95	Bonehill	Allison	1897	Bonehill
23. The Rival Bicyclists	Y. Sports Am.	6/95-7/95	Rockwood	Allison	1897	Bonehill
24. The Wizard of the Sea	Y. Sports Am.	1/95-3/95	Theodore Edison	Mershon	1900	Rockwood
25. By Pluck, Not Luck	Young People of America	10/95-12/95	Young	Allison	1897	Winfield
26. Poor but Plucky	Y. People Am	11/95-12/95	Albert Lee Ford	Allison	1897	Winfield
27. Gun and Sled	Y. People Am	11/95-1/96	Bonehill	Allison	1897	Bonehill
28. Three Young Ranchmen	Y. People Am	11/95-2/96	Stratemeyer	Saalfeld	1901	Bonehill
29. A School Boy's Pluck	Y. People Am	12/95-2/96	Philip A. Alyer	Mershon	1900	Rockwood

30. Bound to be an Electrician	Bright Days	4/96-8/96	Winfield	Allison	1897	Stratemeyer
31. Boys of Spring Hill (and Walter Loring's Career)	Bright Days	5/96-7/96	Albert Lee Ford	Mershon	1900	Chapman
32. Land of Fire	Bright Days	10/96-11/96	Chapman	Mershon	1900	Charles
33. Malcolm the Waterboy (not proven)	Bright Days	9/96-11/96	Louis Charles	Mershon	1901	D. T. Henry
34. The Young Bandmaster	Golden Hours	11/96-12/96	D. T. Henry		1900	Bonehill
35. The Young Naval Captain (Oscar the Naval Cadet)	Golden Hours	2/99-4/99	Bonehill	Mershon	1902	Bonehill
36. Lost in the Land of Ice	Golden Hours	11/00-1/01	Hal Harkaway	Thompson & Thomas		
37. Rival Ocean Divers	Golden Hours	12/00-1/01	Rockwood	Wessels	1902	Bonehill
38. Larry Barlow's Ambition	Golden Hours	1/01-2/01	Rockwood	Stitt	1905	Rockwood
39. The Island Camp	Golden Hours	5/01-7/01	Rockwood	Saalfeld	1902	Winfield
40. Defending His Flag	Popular Mag.	12/03-1/04	Stratemeyer	Barnes	1904	Bonehill
	American Boy	5/06-6/07	Stratemeyer	L. L. & S.	1907	Stratemeyer
	Early Single Titles not yet identified with serials					
1. Young Hunters in Porto Rico				Allison	1897	Bonehill
2. To Alaska for Gold				L & S	1899	Stratemeyer
3. Young Bank Clerk				McKay	1902	Winfield
4. Between Boer & Briton				L & S	1900	Stratemeyer
5. Boy Land Boomer				Saalfeld	1902	Bonehill
6. Two Young Lumbermen				L & S	1903	Stratemeyer
7. The Winning Run				Barnes	1905	Bonehill

# WANTED

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Dave Kanarr

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## Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed:

Being one of those addicts who likes a full mail box, I was disappointed to learn that good ol' DNR is only going to arrive at my door half as often as before, but twice as big.

Enjoyed Doc Dizer's article on Stratemeyer and Science Fiction. Being one of the lucky ones who has about 99% of the Stratemeyer Syndicate books enabled me to double my pleasure.

George Holmes forgot to mention re The TASER invention that the letters in the name stand for Tom Swift and His Electric Rifle.—Dave Kanarr.

Dear Eddie:

Was sorry to read of new two-month schedule for the Roundup, but am with you one hundred per cent on any decision you make for the publication. What with postal rates and the many other factors in makeup, processing and distribution, I can see that the change just makes sense. Best regards.  
—Frank Acker

Dear Ed:

Received and enjoyed the first of the 24 page issue DNR. Liked it very much as the longer articles read better in a single issue than they do when cut up into two or three parts. My only regret is that it cannot continue as a monthly in this size though I know that the work involved would make it impossible (not the work but the finances, Ed. note). Found on the local newsstand with no indication that it was originally published as a juvenile: THE LONE RANGER, by Fran Striker, Pinnacle Books, 275 Madison Ave., New York 10016.—Andy Zerbe

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### NEWS NOTE

A complete set of volumes of **American Boy**, published between 1900 and July-August, 1941 was donated recently to the Hess Collection, University Libraries, by Charles Messecar, 1680 N. W. Murray Road, Portland, Oregon.

Mr. Messecar subscribed to the periodical as a boy, and re-discovered them while reading in the Detroit Public Library, the only other library in the country known to have a complete set. He carried on a lively correspondence with second-hand book dealers throughout the country to fill in the lacking issues.

In 1929, **American Boy** took over the **Youth's Companion**, which had been founded in Boston in 1827. The circulation of **American Boy** in 1929 was 360,000 and the advertising revenue about \$750,000. However, the depression affected circulation and advertisement income, and the magazine died in 1941.

Charles Messecar is retired from General Motors Training Center in Portland, Oregon, where he was manager.

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### WANTED

**WILD WEST WEEKLY  
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1928 to 1938

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### Juvenile Collectors

For available lists send SASE  
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**The Bookseller**

216-762-3101

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## Question and Answer Column

**Q.** After reading all those interesting articles on the various Boy Scouts I thought that all the Boy Scout books had been pretty well accounted for, but my father says that there were others.

Back in the late 1920's or early 30's, he says that he bought a number of books in Woolworths 5 & 10 including a full set of Boy Scout books. These books were a semi-hard cover, woody colored gray (whatever that means) with black lettering, and he believes, a picture of Boy Scout hiking. This, he is not too sure of, but, he remembers that the hero of these stories was named Jack Danby and he came from a very poor family. He also recalls, in the first book, the scouts trailed and captured a gang of thieves which included the brother of Jack Danby.

There were eight volumes in the series which cost 29c each and I was wondering if anyone of our members knows who wrote these books and what were the titles. It would be interesting to find out and also perhaps lead to the discovery of another Boy Scout series. Richard A. Kipp.

**A.** To David Mitchell's question about Josie O'Gorman, Dave Kanarr writes, "Yes, there is a book title 'Josie O'Gorman' in my collection."

**A.** To Charlie Messecar's question concerning the number of cloth bound Merriwells published in the maroon edition, I've come to the conclusion after reviewing the ads in my collection (17 maroon editions and 28 tan editions) that only 24 were issued in the maroon binding. The last four titles, FM's Vacation, in Camp, Cruise and Lads were never advertised in any of the McKay catalogs I've been able to find. Charlie has 22 titles in the maroon edition. The only other collector queried on the subject Leo Moore, has 21 titles. If anyone has any of the 4 titles about in maroon edition, I would certainly enjoy hearing from him.

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## Recently Published Articles Concerning Dime Novels

**SPIRIT OF FRANK MERRIWELL LIVES ON**, by Frank Angelo. Detroit Free Press, Wednesday, August 13, 1975. Mr. Angelo recalls how Frank Merriwell stimulated him during his youth. "For, after all, who was there who didn't want to emulate the great Frank Merriwell and his off-spring, Frank, Jr.—clean cut, always alert, always ready to save the day for God, country and their fellow men." Mr. Angelo's memory is jogged while visiting Marshall, Michigan and the William Wallace Cook house. His information regarding Cook writing the Merriwell stories may be wrong but it is nice to know that there are still men who were inspired by reading about Frank Merriwell. (Sent in by Harry L. Lane.)

**CHILDREN'S LITERATURE JOURNALS**, by David L. Greene. Phaedrus, A Journal of Children's Literature Research, Spring 1975, Vol. II No. 1. Published by Fairleigh Dickinson University, Madison, New Jersey 07940. Subscription \$9.00 per year. Article reviews the various periodicals associated with the collecting of children's and young people's literature. The Dime Novel Roundup is one of the periodicals reviewed. Others include The Newsboy, The Baum Beagle, The Boys' Book Collector and The Burroughs Bulletin.

**HISTORIAN FOR MAN WHO NEVER WAS** — Professor Keeps Close Watch on Nick Carter, Fictional Spy, by Wes Skillings. GRIT, July 13, 1975. Recounts Randy Cox's work in chronicling the Nick Carter saga. Illustrated with a picture of Randy in the midst of his collection and of a modern Nick Carter contrasted with an early edition.



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for my own files

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Paul Jones #19 and up, will pay \$10  
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Liberty Boys. Between #529 and 612

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Only 1 copy of each needed.

Do not send without my order.

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Remember—write first, and describe  
condition

Also want Fred Fearnott, Medal; and  
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Box 985  
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## STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

Act of Aug. 12, 1970, Sec. 3685 Title 39

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Dime Novel Roundup

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Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas  
66044

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87 School Street, Fall River, Mass.  
02720

### Publisher:

Edward T. LeBlanc, 87 School St.,  
Fall River, Mass. 02720

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Edward T. LeBlanc, 87 School St.,  
Fall River, Mass. 02720

### Managing Editor:

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Fall River, Mass. 02720

### Owner:

Edward T. LeBlanc, 87 School St.,  
Fall River, Mass. 02720

Bondholders, Mortgagees, or Security  
Holders: None

	Avg. No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months	Single issue nearest to filing date
Total no. copies printed	550	550

### Paid circulation

Sales thru dealers, car- riers, vendors, etc.	0	0
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Total paid circulation	364	372
Free distribution	0	0
Total distribution	364	372
Office use, left over, etc.	186	178
Returns from News Agents	0	0
Total	550	550

I certify that the statements made by  
me above are correct and complete.

Edward T. LeBlanc

Back numbers Reckless Ralph's Dime  
Novel Roundup (quite a few reprints,  
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01560

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- (5) Yankee Stories: Illustrated Adventures of the Down Easters
- (6) Idle Hours with the Humorists
- (7) Sports and Pastimes of Various Nations
- (8) Stories of the Whale; or, Perils of the Whale Fishery
- (9) Scalping Knife; or, The Log Cabin in Flames
- (10) History of the Horse, and Thrilling Feats of Horsemanship
- (11) Book of Shipwrecks, and Adventures on the Ocean
- (12) Yankee Drolleries; or, Sketches of Down Easters
- (13) Thrilling Stories about Snakes and Snake Charmers
- (14) Hunting the Elephant; or, Adventures in South Africa
- (15) Hunting in South Africa; or, Perils of Forest Life

**NEW ADDRESSES**

- 68 Conde Nast Publications, Inc., 350 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y. 10017  
222 L. C. Dobbins, 139 South Main St., Henderson, Ky. 42420  
196 Harry Mitchell, 1900 Sherren Ave., E., St. Paul, Minn. 55109  
169 E. C. Toewe, Box 281 Rt. 5, Apollo, Pa. 15613  
180 William H. Beadle, Conquistador #3-201, 1800 S. E. St. Lucie Blvd., Stuart, Florida 33494  
203 Mrs. Bertrand Couch, 50 Austin, San Anselmo, Calif. 94960  
272 Nils Hardin, 718 Westchester Ct., St. Louis, Mo. 63122  
124 Leo F. Moore, 16412 Gentry Lane, Huntington Beach, Calif. 92647  
287 Alex T. Shaner, c/o Stanford Applied Engineering, 340 Martin Ave., Santa Clara, California 95050

**NEW MEMBERS**

- 362 Barry King, 172 W. Pike, Pontiac, Mich. 48053  
363 Jerold Rauth, N70 W6204 Bridge Road, Cedarburg, Wis. 53012  
364 Diana J. Berry, 120 Sanial Ave., Northvale, N. J. 07647  
365 Mohawk Valley Community College, 1101 Sherman Dr., Utica, N.Y. 13501  
366 Paul Flayer, Box 431, Ridgefield, New Jersey 07657

**WILLARD THOMPSON, THE "BOOK MAN" DIES**

The "Book Man," Willard Thompson, a fixture in Portland's (Oregon) second-hand bookstores for many years, was found dead Friday, July 18, 1975 in his quarters at 425 N. W. 18th Ave. He was 66. The Multnomah County medical examiner's office said he apparently died of natural causes. Death had occurred some time before the landlady discovered the body at 10:45 a.m. In an interview a few years ago, Mr. Thompson said he ran a bookstore in Los Angeles in the 1950's before coming to Portland and had picked fruit and solicited sales via telephone in other cities. "I don't make much at this book-swapping business," he said. "But I've gotten to the point that life isn't too interesting, and dealing in the books sure helps me keep my sanity." He lived for seven years in a rest home before giving that up for living by himself—with some pet cats—in Northwest Portland. A spokesman for Wilhelm Funeral Home, where arrangements are pending said a search is being made for survivors.



## WANTED

Horatio Alger items—hardbacks, paperbacks, serials.

Also always want Barbour, Heyliger and Henty.

Boy Scout Handbooks before 1946.

Boy's Life before 1942

Railroad Man's Mag Railroad Stories, Railroad Mag.

Seckatary Hawkins—Stormie the Dog Stealer; Knights of the Square Table;

Ching Toy Vellow

Leo Edwards—Inferior Decorators, Funny Bone Farm and Lost Fortune

ALEX T. SHANER

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## HARD COVER BOOKS WANTED

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Discounts of 10% on orders over \$10, 20% on orders over \$25.

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